

May 30, 2018

Mr. Thomas Sheckells
Morris & Ritchie Associates, Inc.
1220-C East Joppa Rd., Suite 505
Towson MD 21286

Re: Royal Farms Store #266, Middle River MD 21220
Forest Conservation Variance
Tracking # 06-18-2689

Dear Mr. Sheckells:

A request for a variance from Baltimore County's Forest Conservation Law for the referenced property was received by the Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability (EPS) on March 29, 2018. The request proposes to remove 2 *Quercus phellos* (32.5 and 37.5-inch diameter at breast height) as part of redevelopment of the commercial property for a store and fuel station. The site is within the Back River and Bird River watersheds. No forest exists on or adjacent to the property, and there are no streams, wetlands, 100-year floodplains on or near the site.

The Director of EPS may grant a special variance to the Forest Conservation Law in accordance with criteria outlined in Section 33-6-116 of the Baltimore County Code. There are six (6) criteria listed in Subsection 33-6-116(d) and (e) that shall be used to evaluate the variance request. One of the three criteria under Subsection 33-6-116 (d) must be met, and all three of the criteria under Subsection 33-6-116 (e) must be met, in order to approve the variance.

The first criterion (Subsection 33-6-116 (d)(1) of the Code) requires that the petitioner show that the land in question cannot yield a reasonable return if the requirement from which the special variance is requested is imposed and will deprive the petitioner of all beneficial use of his property. The applicant proposes to redevelop the existing commercial property for a store and fuel station. Due to site constraints and the infrastructure requirements, this redevelopment for commercial use could not be constructed as proposed without removal of the 2 specimen trees. However, other types of viable commercial uses have existed, or could exist, on the site without impacts to these trees. Therefore, the petitioner would not be deprived of all beneficial use of the property, and this criterion is not met.

The second criterion (Subsection 33-6-116 (d) (2) of the Code) requires that the petitioner show that his/her plight is due to unique circumstances and not the general conditions in the neighborhood. This variance request is due to the location of the specimen trees on the referenced property relative to the proposed redevelopment of the site for a store and fuel station. The development proposed is based on these unique conditions of the property, and not from general conditions of the neighborhood. Therefore, this criterion is met.

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The third criterion (Subsection 33-6-116 (d) (3) of the Code) requires that the petitioner show that the special variance requested will not alter the essential character of the neighborhood. The development is on an existing commercial use site with surrounding commercial uses. Therefore, the proposed commercial redevelopment of the site would be compatible with the neighborhood, and this criterion is met.

The fourth criterion (Subsection 33-6-116 (e) (1) of the Code) requires that the granting of the special variance will not adversely affect water quality. There are no streams, wetlands, 100-year floodplains, or forest buffers on the property. In addition, forest conservation requirements must be met, including mitigation for the specimen trees proposed to be removed. Also, stormwater management must be provided in accordance with current County regulations. Based on this, water quality impacts can be minimized by providing mitigation and stormwater management. Therefore, this criterion is met.

The fifth criterion (Subsection 33-6-116 (e) (2) of the Code) requires that the special variance request does not arise from a condition or circumstance, which is the result of actions taken by the petitioner. This request is based on where the specimen trees are located relative to the proposed development. There has been no work conducted on the property that would have required this request. Therefore, this criterion is met.

The sixth criterion (Subsection 33-6-116 (e)(3) of the Code) requires that the Director of EPS find that the special variance, as granted, would be consistent with the spirit and intent of Article 33 of the Baltimore County Code. The redevelopment of this commercial property must meet all forest conservation requirements outlined in this Code, including mitigation for specimen trees approved for removal. Therefore, this criterion is met.

Based upon our review, this Department finds that the required variance criteria have been met. Therefore, the requested variance is hereby approved, in accordance with Section 33-6-116 of the Baltimore County Code, with the following conditions:

1. Mitigation for the removal of the 2 specimen trees must be met by payment of a fee-in-lieu of \$2,175.81 to the Baltimore County Forest Conservation Fund. The final forest conservation plan (FCP) for this project must be submitted and approved by EPS prior to issuance of any permits. The approved forest conservation worksheet, and all required notes must be included in this plan.
2. On all project plans, add the following note:

A forest conservation special variance was granted by Baltimore County Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability on May 30, 2018 to allow for the removal of 2 specimen trees on this project site. Mitigation was provided by meeting all forest

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conservation requirements as outlined on the forest conservation plan for the project, including a fee-in-lieu payment for the 2 specimen trees to be removed.

It is the intent of this Department to approve this variance subject to the above conditions. Any changes to site layout may require submittal of revised plans and an amended variance request.

Please have the property owner sign the statement at the end of this letter and return a signed copy of this letter to this Department within 21 calendar days. Failure to return a signed copy may render this approval null and void, or may result in delays in the processing of plans for this project.

If you have any questions regarding this correspondence, please contact Paul Dennis at (410) 887-3980.

Sincerely yours,

David V. Lykens
Deputy Director

DVL/pad

c: Marian Honeczy MDDNR

I/we agree to the above conditions to bring my/our property into compliance with Baltimore County Forest Conservation Law.

Property Owner(s)

Date

Printed Name(s)

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